

Message Text

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ACTION SPTA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 SS-14 INR-05 L-01
PM-03 EB-03 /040 W
-----120503 071345Z /46
R 071315Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8321

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PN, PQ, US
SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF PRC MEETING, AUGUST 3, 1978

1. ESCOBAR'S CHARGE OF SABOTAGE AND AMB. JORDEN'S LETTER TO ESCOBAR - THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT HE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO SPEAK FIRMLY AND PUBLICLY IN ORDER TO STOP THE KIND OF RHETORIC REPRESENTED BY ESCOBAR'S REMARKS AND TO ENCOURAGE INSTEAD DISCUSSION OF SUCH QUESTIONS IN THE APPROPRIATE BINATIONAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS. BOTH GENERAL MCAULIFFE AND GOVERNOR PARFITT APPLAUDED THE LETTER WHICH THE GOVERNOR SAID WOULD ALSO HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON MORALE OF PANCANAL EMPLOYEES.

2. PROGRESS IN FORMATION OF JOINT SUBCOMMITTEES - LT. GOVERNOR REPORTED AGREEMENT WITH PANAMANIAN ON IDENTIFICATION OF THE NUMBER AND FUNCTIONS OF VARIOUS SUBCOMMITTEES AND NOTED THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP HAS ALREADY MET AND THE BOUNDARY SURVEY GROUP IS SCHEDULED TO MEET NEXT WEEK.

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3. PANAMA'S DEBTS TO PANCANAL - AMBASSADOR JORDEN REPORTED ON HIS MEETING WITH MINISTER OF PLANNING BARLETTA IN WHICH THE SUBJECT OF PANAMA'S DEBT REPAYMENT TO PANCANAL WAS DISCUSSED. HE SAID HE HOPED TO RESOLVE THIS MATTER BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE. THE GOVERNOR EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR AN EARLY SOLUTION SINCE DEBT-REPAYMENT COULD IMPACT ON OVERALL BUDGETING AND TOLL-SETTING SCHEDULED FOR 1979.

4. USE OF MILITARY AND CANAL COMMISSION FACILITIES BY
USG EMPLOYEES - AMBASSADOR JORDEN RAISED THE MATTER OF
THE USE OF MILITARY AND CANAL COMMISSION FACILITIES AND
SERVICES BY EMBASSY AND OTHER USG EMPLOYEES AND
DEPENDENTS. HE ADVISED HE WOULD SEEK IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE TO INCLUDE THE CATEGORIES REQUESTED BY SOUTHCOM
(RETIRES ETC.) IN THE EMBASSY'S APPROACH TO THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY. THE GOVERNOR EMPHASIZED THAT HE DID NOT OBJECT
TO THE AMBASSADOR'S PROPOSAL BUT THAT HE COULD NOT BE IN
THE POSITION OF SUPPORTING MORE PRIVILEGES FOR USG
EMPLOYEES AND OTHERS THAN FOR CANAL COMMISSION EMPLOYEES.
GENERAL MCAULIFFE POINTED OUT THAT USE OF DOD FACILITIES
WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE TO BE REVIEWED AFTER THE 30-MONTH
IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD SINCE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SIZE
AND CAPACITY OF FACILITIES COULD BE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED
OVER TIME.

5. BINATIONAL WORKING GROUP - A DECISION ON WHETHER THE
EMBASSY SHOULD BE ACCORDED FULL MEMBERSHIP IN LIEU OF
OBSERVER STATUS ON THE BINATIONAL GROUP WAS DEFERRED UNTIL
LATER. EVERYONE AGREED THAT THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT, WITH
THE EMBASSY AND SOUTHCOM AS OBSERVERS, IS WORKING WELL AND
THAT IT IS PROBABLY BEST FOR NOW NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT.

6. PANCANAL BOARD MEETING - THE GOVERNOR REPORTED THAT
DURING THE RECENT BOARD MEETING IN WASHINGTON THERE WAS
MUCH DISCUSSION ON THE BACKLOG OF SHIPPING, ITS CAUSES AND
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WHAT WAS BEING DONE TO REMEDY THE PROBLEM. DEVELOPMENTS
ON TREATY PLANNING INCLUDING THE EDWIN FABREGA LETTER TO
GEN. PARFITT WERE ALSO COVERED. THE NEW BUDGET DESCRIBED
AS A CONSERVATIVE BUDGET WAS APPROVED BY THE BOARD -
CONSERVATIVE BECAUSE PANCANAL HAS ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY
FOR FULL FUNDING OF SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL COSTS UNTIL IT
KNOWS OTHERWISE. THE GOVERNOR REPORTED THAT THE BOARD IS
WRESTLING WITH THE PROBLEM OF ESTABLISHING A POLICY
RELATING TO THE TRANSFER TO PANAMA OF ASSETS NOT SPECIFIED
IN THE TREATY SUCH AS FIRE ENGINES AND GARBAGE TRUCKS.

7. MILITARY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM - GENERAL MCAULIFFE
MENTIONED THAT WHILE MANY PANAMANIAN WERE PREPARED TO
CRITICIZE THE MILITARY AND PANCANAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM HE
PERSONALLY SAW EVIDENCE DAILY OF ONGOING MAINTENANCE IN THE
FORM OF ROAD REPAIR, PAINTING, ETC. HE SAID THAT ONE OF
HIS SUBCOMMITTEES HAS DEVELOPED A PLAN TO PUBLICIZE THE
MILITARY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM UTILIZING THE JOINT SUB-
COMMITTEE AS THE VEHICLE. THE GOVERNOR REPORTED THAT
PANCANAL IS EXPENDING \$500,000 MORE THAN PLANNED THIS YEAR
ON MAINTENANCE BUT NOTED THAT A POTENTIAL AREA FOR
MISUNDERSTANDING LIES IN SCHOOLS WHICH HAVE BEEN VACATED
AND WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO VANDALISM DURING THE COMING YEAR

BEFORE THEY ARE TURNED OVER TO PANAMA. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT WE INFORM THE PANAMANIAN OF THIS PROBLEM AND OF THE REASONS FOR NO FURTHER MAINTENANCE.

8. ARMY ENGINEERS IMPLEMENTATION DESIGN WORK TO BEGIN - GENERAL MCAULIFFE ADVISED THAT U.S. ARMY ENGINEERS PERSONNEL WILL BE HERE SHORTLY TO BEGIN DESIGN WORK IN ORDER TO DEVELOP ESTIMATES THAT WILL ENABLE SOUTHCOM TO GO TO CONTRACT BY OCTOBER. HE INDICATED HE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE 11 TO 15 MILLION DOLLARS FROM SECDEF CONTINGENCY FUNDS THIS FISCAL YEAR FOR IMPLEMENTATION PURPOSES.

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ACTION SPTA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 SS-14 INR-05 L-01

PM-03 EB-04 /041 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8322

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9. CEMETERIES - CEMETERY RELOCATION WAS DISCUSSED BRIEFLY AND THE EARLY VISIT (AUG 7) OF THE WASHINGTON NEGOTIATORS WAS WELCOMED. JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING REPORTS, POLITICAL SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PANAMA05677
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780322-0958
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780892/aaaacyyd.tel
Line Count: 156
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3c699a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SPTA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS, LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS, LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1819863
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHLIGHTS OF PRC MEETING, AUGUST 3, 1978
TAGS: PEPR, PN, PQ, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3c699a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014